

## Study Context

This digital storytelling action research study was conducted in a rural Iowa middle school. The district consists of two elementary buildings, one middle school and one high school and serves about 1600 students in the four buildings. The enrollment of this sixth grade through eighth grade middle school is 430 students.

### *Participants*

The participants in this study included the students, teacher and myself, as the researcher. Seventy students, in three intact seventh grade language arts classes, who attend an eastern Iowa middle school participated in this action research study. The classroom teacher involved has twenty-eight years of teaching experience. She had taught at the sixth grade level for the past seven years before moving to seventh grade this year. Hence, this was the teacher's first year teaching seventh grade language arts, so the curriculum was completely new to her. The teacher is Nationally Board Certified and was actively involved in the planning and implementation of this digital storytelling curriculum with the researcher. I have four years of elementary teaching experience. I taught fourth grade and have significant expertise using the technology required to complete the digital storytelling project. For the past two years, I have taught multiple lab sections of undergraduate students who are enrolled in the required introductory instructional technology course at a university.

This was the first time the teacher implemented a digital storytelling project in her language arts class. None of the students had created a digital story prior to this study. Previously, the teacher has used still digital cameras, Appleworks Slideshow, the Internet and word processing programs with students. Although the teacher had no previous experience using

digital video software like iMovie, she observed one of her sons using it for a high school science project and was motivated to use it with her own students.